

HTPCC Legislation and Policy Committee

Virtual Meeting

MINUTES¹

Thursday, 29 October 2020

ATTENDANCE:

Members Present: Jay Prager (Dept of Health), Andrea Nunez, Cheryl Mattis, Richard Gibson (Howard Co State's Attorney's Office), Dina Ward (Howard County Sheriff's Office), Yolanda Sonnier (Howard County Office of Human Rights), Stephen Liggett-Creel (Howard County Dept of Social Services), Leslie Lampieri and Jon Steuernagle (Howard County General Hospital/ Hopkins), Lt. Eric Kruhm (HCPD), Savanna Khoury (HopeWorks), Jessica Epps (Howard County Commission for Women), Alicia Altamirano, Monica Krebs, Chuck Chandler, Dona Bauer.

Members Absent: Dave Francis (Office of the Chief), Sara Cochran (HoCo AGAST), Dona Bauer.

Others in Attendance: Kathy Jordan (HoCo AGAST), Rachel Oslund, Maggie Crook, Tamera Bulla and Gina Pagani.

MEETING SUMMARY:

1. MEETING OPEN

- a. 12:00 pm; Monica Krebs, Chair, called the meeting to order and welcomed committee members to the HTPCC Legislation and Policy Committee meeting.

2. Old Business

- a. State Legislation Proposals: Monica Krebs reviewed the legislation proposal to address discrepancies in the sex offender registry. Ms. Krebs noted that the discussion would have to be tabled until further clarification is received from the grant manager.
- b. County Supply Chain Actions: Ms. Krebs noted it was unclear if the committee would be able to move forward with review and tabled the discussion.

3. New Business

- a. OVC Grant Key Terms Review- Andrea Nunez reviewed the language included in the grant, noting that it states the committee cannot lobby. Ms. Nunez noted that she has contacted the grant manager with OVC to determine if the committee will need to rework their overall mission to focus on goals identified within the grant.

Cheryl Mattis expressed that one of the main functions of the committee was to inform and propose recommendation to the county executive. Ms. Mattis asked whether the committee would be able to continue this function.

Lt. Eric Kruhm suggested that the committee could still provide a detailed analysis to help the county executive take a stance. The goal would be to provide information with the hope that the county would propose a bill that would create change.

Rich Gibson agreed noting that providing factual information without bias is different than taking facts to align with an intended outcome. The committee could present the gaps, information and a solution.

Alicia Altamirano suggested the committee contact someone familiar with lobbying to determine whether there were possible exceptions to the grant funding.

Monica Krebs concluded the committee should wait for further clarification and confirmation on grant funds.

- b. January HT Awareness Month**- Andrea Nunez opened discussion around potential initiatives for the Human Trafficking Awareness Month in January. The goal being to present committee ideas and for the council to make a final decision during the next full meeting. Ms. Nunez proposed the idea to discuss myths and misinformation surrounding human trafficking, to include social media posts. She noted the committee should be established as leaders within the community and should speak with authority about what human trafficking is and what it is not.

Monica Krebs proposed a panel discussion with survivors of both labor and sex trafficking alongside professionals in the county. Ms. Krebs agreed that myth-busting and misinformation is a trend that they are starting to see among local organizations. She suggested a multiday virtual event offering one-hour sessions which attendees could choose from.

- c. Hotels, Trainings and Future Actions**: Andrea Nunez shared that over the next few months in partnership with Lt. Eric Kruhm, they will be reviewing crime data in relation to hotels within Howard County. Ms. Nunez noted that the process to train and/ or mandate training for all hotel employees has been delayed due to COVID-19, therefore they are seeking voluntary completion. Ms. Nunez is working with Amanda Hoff, Visit Howard County, to tailor training for the hotel industry.

Lt. Eric Kruhm shared they have reviewed twenty months of service calls at hotels, adding that not all were identified as human trafficking related. Lt. Kruhm posed the question whether the county could create an ordinance to force the hotel industry to train employees.

Chuck Chandler stated that branded hotels (i.e. Hilton, Hyatt, Marriott, Wyndham, etc.) have mandatory training and annual refresher trainings in place for employees. Mr. Chandler suggested identifying where the issues are, specifically in relation to branded or unbranded hotels. He noted that training for unbranded hotels will have to be voluntary. Mr. Chandler expressed the importance of differentiating between franchise and corporate owned establishments. He suggested speaking to individual General Managers / Owners to determine what is mandated and whether they would complete the training voluntarily. Furthermore,

noting it may come down to a cost-benefit as additional training would cost the establishment money.

Monica Krebs explained Polaris provides training for two parent companies, Wyndham and Choice. However, due to the way each company is set up, they do not have control over the individual franchises. The company provides trainings through their system, but they cannot mandate their completion. Ms. Krebs suggested contacting hotels individually to offer training.

- d. OVC Enhanced Funding- Andrea Nunez explained one of the grant proposal commitments included data driven community assessment for labor trafficking vulnerabilities. Ms. Nunez led conversation to identify what vulnerabilities the committee was aware of within the county. Committee members identified the following vulnerabilities: H2A/ H2B visa holders, undocumented workers, nail salons, housekeepers, au pairs, hospitality industry (hotels, restaurants, etc.), and affluent areas.

5. Announcements and Events of Importance

- a. October 30: Training Outreach and Partnerships Committee Meeting, 10:00 am – 11:00 am.
- b. November 19: Human Trafficking Prevention Coordination Council Meeting, 1:00 pm – 2:30 pm

6. Additional Items for Discussion

- a. Tamera Bulla shared the Howard County Police Department is hiring a new Corporal for the Human Trafficking unit.
- b. Rich Gibson will connect with the human trafficking team to discuss potential areas of legislation the committee could focus advocacy efforts and provide feedback during the next scheduled meeting.

7. Next Coordination Council Meeting Date(s)

- a. The next meeting of the HTPCC Legislation and Policy Committee is to be determined. The meeting will be virtual.

8. ADJOURNMENT:

- a. Andrea Nunez motioned to conclude the meeting. The meeting concluded.

Minutes were drafted by: Briana Davis

Monica Krebs

Chair



Notes:

- 1) The meeting was conducted virtually due to the COVID-19 pandemic.